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ABSTRACT

Endorsed by five national educational organizations (the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education, the College Entrance Examination Board, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals), the fact sheet outlines principles of good practice in college admissions and recruitment. Topic headings include (1) admissions promotion and recruitment, (2) application procedures, (3) financial assistance, and (4) advanced standing students and the awarding of credit. For each topic, the role to be played by colleges and universities and by cooperating schools and community agencies is described. (LH)

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JOINT STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

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National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

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Joint Statement on Principles of Good Practice in College Admissions and Recruitment

Five national organizations—the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education, the College Entrance Examination Board, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals—have approved or endorsed the following statement of principles of good practice. In doing so, they reaffirm their commitment to the principle of equal access without regard to race, creed, sex, handicap, political affiliation or national origin in programs and services of postsecondary counseling, admissions, and financial assistance.*

1. Admissions promotion and recruitment

1.1 Principles relating to colleges and universities

A. Admissions counselors are professional members of their institution's staff. As professionals, they receive remuneration on a fixed salary, rather than commission or bonus based on the number of students recruited.

B. When admissions counselors are responsible for the development of publications used for their institution's promotional and recruitment activities designed to elicit the interests of prospective students, these publications should:

- state clearly and precisely requirements for secondary school preparation, admissions tests, and transfer-student admissions requirements;
- include a current and accurate admissions calendar;
- give precise information about opportunities and requirements for financial aid;
- describe in detail any special programs such as overseas study, early decision, early admission, credit-by-examination, or advanced placement;
- contain descriptions of the campus and community that are current and realistic.

C. Colleges and universities are responsible for all people they involve in admissions, promotional, and recruitment activities (including their alumni, coaches, students, faculty) and for educating them about the principles outlined in this statement. Colleges and universities that engage the services of admissions management firms or consulting firms are responsible for assuring that such firms adhere to the principles stated herein.

D. Admissions counselors are forthright and accurate and give comprehensive information in presenting their institutions to high school personnel, prospective students, and their parents. They:

- state clearly the admissions and other requirements of their institutions;
- make clear all dates concerning application, notification, and candidates' reply requirements, for both admissions and financial aid;
- furnish data descriptive of currently enrolled classes;
- avoid unfavorable comparisons with other institutions.

E. Admissions counselors avoid unprofessional promotional tactics, such as:

- contracting with high school personnel for remuneration for referred students;
- contracting with placement services that require a fee from the institution for each student enrolled;
- encouraging students to transfer if they have shown no interest in doing so.

F. Admissions counselors do not recruit students enrolled and registered at other colleges or universities unless the students initiate inquiries themselves, or unless cooperation is sought from institutions that provide transfer programs.

1.2 Principles relating to schools. Schools will:

A. Provide a program of counseling that is accurate and comprehensive with respect to the college opportunities sought by students and available to them.

B. Encourage students and their parents to take the initiative in learning about colleges and universities.

C. Invite college and university representatives to assist in counseling candidates about college opportunities.

D. Avoid unfavorable comparisons with other institutions.

E. Refuse unethical or unprofessional requests (e.g., for lists of top students, lists of athletes, etc.) from college or university representatives (e.g., alumni, coaches, etc.).

F. Refuse any reward or remuneration from a college, university, or private counseling service for placement of their school's students.

1.3 Principles relating to community agencies. Such agencies will:

A. Provide accurate descriptions for schools and colleges of the services available through their agencies, since it is the responsibility of community agencies to make such services known to students, parents, secondary schools, and colleges.

B. Provide students with up-to-date information on postsecondary institutions and processes.

C. Assist students in discovering the colleges that meet their abilities, needs, and interests.

D. Counsel students on all postsecondary options: college, vocational education, job opportunities.

E. Report to secondary schools on their respective students so that accurate files can be maintained in the schools.

1.4 College fairs, clearinghouses, and matching services that provide liaison between colleges and universities and students shall be considered a positive part of the admissions process if they effectively supplement other high school guidance activities and adhere to the principles of good practice stated herein.

2. Application procedures

2.1 Colleges and universities will:

A. Accept full responsibility for admissions decisions and for proper notification of those decisions to candidates and, when possible, to secondary schools.

B. Receive information about candidates in confidence and respect completely, within the confines of federal and/or state laws, the confidential nature of such data.

C. Not apply newly revised requirements to the disadvantage of a candidate whose secondary school course has been established in accordance with earlier requirements.

D. Notify candidates as soon as possible if they are clearly inadmissible.

E. Not deny admission to a candidate on the grounds that their institution does not have aid funds to meet the candidate's apparent financial need, except for foreign students.

F. Not require candidates or their schools to indicate the order of candidates' college or university preferences, except under early-decision plans.

G. Permit candidates to choose, without penalty, among offers of admission until they have heard from all colleges to which

*It is recognized that Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments specifically exempts single-sex undergraduate institutions.

they have applied, or until the date established under the Candidates Reply Date Agreement.

H. Maintain a waiting list of reasonable length and only for a reasonable period of time.

I. State clearly the application procedures for transfer students by informing candidates of deadlines, documents required, courses accepted, and course equivalency.

2.2 Secondary schools will:

A. Provide for colleges and universities accurate, legible, and complete transcripts for their school's candidates.

B. Describe their school's marking system and method of determining rank in class.

C. Describe clearly special curricular opportunities (e.g., honors, advanced placement courses, seminars, etc.).

D. Provide accurate descriptions of the candidates' personal qualities that are relevant to the admissions process.

E. Report any significant change in candidates' status or qualifications between the time of recommendation and graduation.

F. Urge candidates to recognize and discharge their responsibilities in the admissions process by:

- complying with requests for additional information in a timely manner;
- responding to institutional deadlines on admissions and refraining from stockpiling acceptances;
- responding to institutional deadlines on room reservations, financial aid, health records, and prescheduling where all or any of these are applicable.

G. Not, without permission of candidates, reveal the candidates' college preference.

H. Advise students not to sign any contractual agreement with an institution without examining the provisions of the contract.

I. Advise students to notify other institutions when they have accepted an admissions offer.

2.3 Community agencies will:

A. Exercise their responsibility to the entire educational community.

B. Discourage unnecessary multiple applications.

C. Discourage students from stockpiling offers of admission.

3. Financial assistance

(where such assistance is based on need). Financial assistance consists of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment, which may be offered to all students singly or in various forms.

3.1 Colleges and universities will:

A. Strive, through their publications and communications, to provide schools, parents, and students with factual information about their institution's aid opportunities, programs, and practices.

B. View financial assistance from colleges and other sources as supplementary to the efforts of a student's family when the student is not self-supporting.

C. In determining the financial contribution of a candidate's family, use methods that assess ability to pay in a consistent and equitable manner, such as those developed by the College Scholarship Service and the American College Testing Program.

D. Clearly state the total yearly cost of attending their institution and outline estimates of need for students seeking assistance.

E. Permit candidates to choose, without penalty, among offers of financial assistance until they have heard from all colleges to which they have applied, or until the date established under the Candidates Reply Date Agreement.

F. Clearly state policies on renewals of aid awards.

G. Not announce publicly the amount of financial award to an individual candidate, and thus avoid revealing the candidate's family financial situation.

H. Not consider a student's need for financial aid as a criterion for admissions selection.

I. Notify applicants of institutional financial aid decisions before the date by which they must reply to the institution's offer of admission.

J. Meet the full need of students to the extent possible within the institution's capabilities.

K. Make awards to students who apply for renewal of aid by reviewing the student's financial circumstances and establishing the amount of aid needed with full consideration of the student's current need.

3.2 Secondary schools will:

A. Refrain, in public announcements, from giving the amounts of financial aid received by students.

B. Advise students who have been awarded aid by sources outside colleges that it is their responsibility to notify the colleges to which they have applied of the type and amount of such outside assistance.

4. Advanced standing students and the awarding of credit

4.1 Colleges and universities agree that:

A. Placement, credit, and exemption policies that are designed principally to recruit students are inimical to the best interests of students.

B. Student achievement should be evaluated through use of validated methods and techniques.

C. Policies and procedures for granting credit should be defined and published as part of an institution's preadmissions information.

D. The evaluation of previously earned credit should be done in a manner that insures the integrity of academic standards published by the admitting college or university.

4.2 Secondary school personnel agree that they will:

A. Alert students to the full implications of college and university placement, credit, and exemption policies for the student's educational planning and goals.

B. Make students aware of the importance of accreditation.

C. Make students aware of the possibilities of earning credit through nontraditional educational experience and through examinations and alternative methods of instruction.

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